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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 000982

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP/ECC - P. VAN SON
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TAGS: [EWWT](#) [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PARM](#) [KSTC](#) [PREL](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: AQABA PORT ISPS SECURITY PLAN

REF: A. 04 STATE 219111 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. 04 STATE 200534 (NOTAL)
[1](#)C. 04 STATE 160115

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires David Hale. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Aqaba port authorities are working hard to comply with the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security Plan (ISPS), which took effect last July 1 (Ref C). A strong management team from the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) is working with a private consulting firm to implement the ISPS in phases over the next few years. However, the Aqaba Ports Corporation and the newly formed Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC) that oversees the physical port infrastructure face stiff challenges ahead and will likely need technical assistance, including in areas of port security vulnerability assessment and marine-side security of the port. The semi-autonomous authorities in Aqaba are committed to meeting basic ISPS security benchmarks by the next IMO deadline of June 30 and hope in the long run to implement a security plan consistent with Aqaba's desire to be a world-class port facility. END SUMMARY.

ISPS and Port Facility Security

[1](#)2. (C) Emboffs visited Aqaba port in November and again in a follow-up visit January 27, specifically to review the ISPS in light of Jordan's commitment to an Export Controls and Related Border Security (EXBS) program. In a meeting with Econoff and TDY EXBS advisor January 27, the Director General of the Jordan Maritime Authority said that a committee under his chairmanship was monitoring ISPS implementation from a government regulatory point of view and would continue to work with the IMO and the Ministry of Transportation. For the day-to-day implementation of security, JMA is responsible for security/safety inspection of Jordanian-registered ships and those ships entering port that have not had a routinely scheduled inspection. To date, these ships have presented no serious problems, the JMA team noted, or have come up to compliance when minor infractions were noted.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ports Corporation has responsibility for implementing the Port Facility Security Plan under the ISPS. However, as ownership of the Aqaba Port has just been transferred to the newly designated umbrella Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC), it has been ADC's task to implement the ISPS security plan across three areas (main, container, and industrial ports) stretching along some 18 kilometers of coastline, with interspersed smaller facilities such as rice stores and a bulk cement berth. The security plan -- covering access control, perimeter monitoring, emergency responses -- is now being studied by consulting company Hudson Trident Marine to determine what hardware and human resources are required on a sequenced timeline. We heard that a force of 100 guards will handle overall port security, answering to a single coordinated command. This is in addition to the extensive police, military and intelligence presence in Aqaba, all of whom work closely with Israeli authorities in the neighboring, smaller port of Eilat.

[1](#)4. (U) ADC has commissioned Bearing Point to follow up with its overall port development plan and they are working closely on ISPS implementation with security consultant Hudson Trident Marine.

ISPS Plan on Track

[1](#)5. (C) Hudson Trident is scheduled to finish in late February its detailed ISPS implementation plan, including ready-to-go tenders for security infrastructure and hardware -- from fencing to high-tech sensors. In the meantime, according to Bearing Point project manager Arun Aggarwal, the ADC has every intention of meeting, if not exceeding, the basic security requirements of the ISPS by the first 12-month deadline this coming June 30. Aggarwal is quick to note that the undertaking is complex and said technical assistance would be greatly appreciated.

[1](#)6. (C) COMMENT: ADC's ongoing development plan is in addition to other GOJ proposals to expand the port (Ref A).

Aqaba Port is a strategic supply point for Iraq and the coalition forces. Jordanian officials do not underestimate the port's potential as a target for terrorists. At the same time, the port's rapid development, just after a difficult time of serious congestion, has put strains on all aspects of management. The Customs side of the operation -- which benefited from DHS-supported EXBS Seaport Interdiction training last July -- is in good basic working order, though at Customs, too, there is room for improvement. However, Jordan has a long to-do list to meet ISPS requirements. It would appear that ADC and the Aqaba Ports Corporation are on track to meet the ISPS benchmarks, but technical assistance in areas such as port vulnerability assessment or marine-side security (through the U.S. Coast Guard) or other help already discussed as possible (Ref B) would be welcome and timely.

17. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.
HALE